

an empty suite below us for dancing, and got an orchestra and a whole lot of gilt chairs. I figured it out today that I was about thirty-seven thousand dollars in the hole up to date. The Count had come high; but Marg had to have him, and so long as she was happy and I could keep out of jail I didn't care. Knowing that it was a love match, and the Count wasn't after Marg's money, it didn't matter. I could stand it.

**THAT'S** the way it stood this morning, when I went down town to my grind. Florists all over the house, men nailing down canvas on the floors, footmen in everybody's way, a lot of extra maids and servants fussing about, and the caterers stewing things in the kitchen! I was glad to clear out and get down to my office where I could be quiet. Worked like a Chinaman all day, and tried to forget we were marrying into the nobility.

"I was so nervous and excited, though, that I couldn't stand eating lunch in a restaurant where I should be likely to meet any of my friends; so I dropped into one of those little cheap, quick-lunch, ham-and-egg places under the Brooklyn Bridge. I ordered some weak tea and milk toast, and was trying to read the paper, when I heard a voice that simply paralyzed me. It was behind a flimsy wooden partition, in the kitchen, and it was yelling 'Draw one!' or something like that. Perhaps it was 'Ham and over!'

"Then a waiter in a dirty suit came out of the doorway, with about sixteen dishes balanced along his arm, and an apron on. It was the Count Capricorni. Yes, that's right! That miserable waiter was the man that about eighteen servants and six hundred guests were preparing for up at Wycherley Court. And I had spent something like thirty-seven thousand dollars so that he wouldn't be ashamed of Marguerite!"

Morgan stopped and smiled sadly. "I don't think he saw me at all. He turned to put some things on a table, and I bolted without waiting for my lunch. You see how I'm fixed, don't you? I thought that if he did show up tonight, so that we could get the reception over with, I could get rid of him tomorrow, forever. But he didn't come."

Fenton shook his head. "No," he answered, "and I don't think you'll ever see him again. I guess he's done for, poor fellow!"

**MORGAN** construed the remark according to his own lights, probably thinking that the Count had suspected that his real identity had been discovered. Fenton did not explain; he dared not say that he was virtually sure that the bogus Count Capricorni lay dead in an office on the thirteenth story of the St. Paul Building. He wanted to forget what he had seen—at least until he had performed his duty. The reverie it threw him into was broken by Morgan.

"You see what I was up against."

"Must have been embarrassing," said Fenton.

"Embarrassing? Well, I guess! When eleven o'clock came, and he hadn't come, I told Marg all about it, and she nearly went crazy. 'What are we going to do?' she said—as if I knew! There we were again without the guest of honor; Hamlet, with the Prince left out. The place was beginning to fill up, and everybody was asking questions."

"Well, what did you do?" said Fenton, beginning to be amused.

"Marg was splendid; she took right hold of it. She told me that I'd simply got to get somebody to impersonate the Count, or she would be disgraced forever, and meanwhile she'd tell everybody that the Count had been delayed in Washington and would arrive at midnight. That would give me an hour to work it out. I confess I was frightened to death. I didn't like to deceive people; but what else could I do? Marg would be insane if I didn't save her reputation."

"Well, the only person I could think of was Harold Ringrose, a college mate of mine. We often played bezique together. He's a manufacturing chemist, down on Vesey-st. I rung up his house; but they said he was down town. I tried his office—no answer. There was nothing for me to do but go down there and find him, and try to get him to play the part. I thought I could play the old friendship and family honor strong enough to induce him. He knows hardly anybody, and no one would ever suspect him. So I drove down there. There was a light in the sixth story window, but I couldn't get any answer to the bell; and after I'd shouted as loud as I dared, a policeman told me to move on. So I drove back, not knowing what to do, till I met you."

Morgan suddenly turned and grasped Fenton's arm with both his. "Do this for me, for Heaven's sake!" he exclaimed, and weakly burst into tears. "God knows I never wanted all this fluff and feathers!" he sobbed. "I'm a simple man with simple ways. I

don't like fashion and footmen and things—I want to be let alone—only Marguerite!"

"Oh, brace up, old man!" Fenton cried heartily. "I'll save your face for you. Depend on me. It'll be a good joke on all these snobs. Is everything ready?"

"Yes. Here, we're almost home now! Home! God! I wish I'd never seen Wycherley Court."

## IX. WYCHERLEY COURT

**THEY** had been going up Riverside Drive, and as Morgan spoke they approached a tall marble apartment house from which an awning stretched across the sidewalk to the curb. Here a line of carriages and automobiles were in line waiting to discharge their passengers.

Morgan leaned forward and tapped his chauffeur on the shoulder. "Round to the side entrance!" he commanded.

Here he and Fenton got out, and made their way rapidly into and along a corridor to the back stairs. They climbed ten stories, and arrived panting at the back door of the Morgan apartment, were let in by a staring servant, and conducted rapidly along the hall. As they passed, Fenton heard the continuous sound of gabble and intermingled talk and laughter of many guests, inarticulate, confused, an unsteady murmur of voices. It sounded to him as if it might come from some monstrous, horrid beast with innumerable mouths. Servants of all kinds skeltered past him as he made his way, waiters loaded with dishes, maids with women's wraps, men servants, gossiping, loafing, gaping. A high, clear laugh rose over all this subdued tumult.

"Marg's holding the fort!" said Morgan admiringly, and led the way into his own chamber. "Now for Heaven's sake hurry!"

**FENTON** had time only to see a wide white bed laid out with a complete outfit—evening clothes, shirt, tie—when two men servants fell upon him and tore off his coat, vest, and trousers with the fury of maniacs. As they held the dress trousers for him, a young woman put her head through the door excitedly.

"Has he come?" she cried. And then, "Oh, there you are! Thank goodness!"

Fenton took a leap into the black trousers just as she burst into the room.

"Is he ready?" she cried eagerly. "For Heaven's sake hurry, you idiots! I can't wait a minute longer. Stillwell, put on his shoes, quick! Here, you crazy loon, you've got that collar upside down! For Heaven's sake let me do it, if you're all halfwitted!" And Fenton found himself suddenly confronted by a tall, pretty, blue-eyed girl with flushed cheeks, all in white, with three ostrich feathers nodding in her hair. "Hold your head still!" she commanded. "I can't do anything if you move that way! Here, you, put his gloves on, quick!"

A man attacked each hand. Stillwell Morgan still fussed at the bows of Fenton's shoes. Marguerite Maganel Morgan, in white gloves, with orchids on her breast, her flushed face within an inch of his, worked over Fenton like a window dresser with a wax figure. Her sweet breath was in his face, her curls brushed his cheeks, as she patted and pulled at his tie. He saw her pretty mouth working with nervousness. Then she stepped back and looked at him.

"Mercy!" she shrieked. "This isn't Mr. Ringrose! Who is it? She stared at him with big eyes, and turned scarlet.

"I believe I have the honor of being Count Capricorni," said Fenton, bowing low.

A maid tapped at the door, and entered halfway. "Mrs. Grahamson-Davis wants to see you, Miss Morgan," she said. "She has to go home. Says she can't wait any longer."

Miss Morgan grabbed Fenton by one arm. "Come!" she commanded savagely. "I don't care who you are, you'll do! If I can only satisfy that old Mrs. Grahamson-Davis, I'm safe!" and she dragged him out of the room into the hall.

Here he asserted himself, offered his other arm, tossed his head erect, and stepped off with her. If he was to play a part, he decided it would be that of a man, not a puppet. Miss Morgan looked up at him with admiration.

"It was awfully good of you to come!" she breathed.

"It's about time for something like that to be said," he replied haughtily. "You treat me right, or I'll spoil the show!"

"Oh, I'll do anything—anything!" she exclaimed; then, dropping her voice, she added, "I wish you were Count Capricorni!"

With this exquisite compliment pleasantly ringing in his ears, he navigated his way through staring, whispering groups of guests and entered the reception room. A buzz of comments greeted them. Everybody stared; they were immediately surrounded; innumerable introductions began.

**FENTON**, for the first time in his life in evening dress, with a foolish wild longing that Belle Carillon might see him, played his part like a veteran. As one eager, curious person after another was presented, he bowed, shook hands, uttered pleasantries, laughed, and gestured, and shrugged his shoulders as if he had been the petted hero of society all his life.

Of all the remarkable situations he found himself in that mad night, this was perhaps the most dangerous. The very peril of it, however, inspired him. The gaiety of the scene went to his head like a cocktail; his mind worked like an exquisitely adjusted high-speed machine. The crowd, elaborately dressed, wove about him, smiling, pretty women and attentive men, the lights of electroliers and cutglass and precious stones flashed in his eyes, the perfume of frangipani and peau d'Espagne mingled with the wafted odors of oysters and terrapin from the dining room. The clink of glasses tinkled with laughter laden voices. The music of an orchestra sobbed and swelled with the voices of heartbroken strings, and twittered with loveless wood instruments.

It all stimulated his imagination to the boiling point. He talked as he had never talked before,—of things he knew nothing of, things he didn't believe, things as far outside of his life as Chimborazo or Cambodia. It was the easier when he perceived that nobody listened,—everyone was hysterical, hypnotized, eager to add his or her nonsense to the general babel. He talked wildly of bridge and golf, of plays he had never seen, of countries he had never visited. But he might as well have said anything,—that he was dead and buried, that he had forgotten to wear a shirt, that his mother had whiskers. No one would have noticed. He gossiped of Kings and Princesses, he mentioned at least seven new wonders of the world. The women giggled, the men said "Really!" and no one knew but that he had been speaking commonplaces.

"You're doing fine—fine!" Miss Morgan whispered to him at the first respite. "I'm proud of you!" She looked up under her lashes coquettishly. "What a pity we're not really engaged! The poor Count!"

**AT** that there came to him suddenly a flash of remembrance of the adventurer, dead in the St. Paul Building. The memory swept like a chill wind over his soul and awakened him to his almost forgotten duty. The jewels! He had forgotten all about them. At this minute he should be speeding

up town to Harlem, to keep his promise. What right had he here, in this absurd disguise? The charm of the adventure had gone to his head. He must be about his business.

Just as he was casting about for a pretext to go, his ears caught the sound of a name, "Miss Belle Carillon," and he turned, shocked and trembling, to see before him the girl of his dreams. There she was, olive skin and soft hazel eyes, whimsical mouth, the pretty, slender girl he had already seen twice that evening. She was staring at him, and her brows were knitted.

"Haven't we—met before?" she asked hesitatingly, as she held out her hand.

What could he say? Surely he could not disclaim her acquaintance, neither should he stultify his hostess. For a moment everything seemed to go black in front of him, then that very feeling suggested an excuse for not answering. He put his hand to his heart and dropped to a chair.

"I feel faint," he murmured. "Will you pardon me, Miss Morgan, if I—"

"You'd better go into Still's room for a moment," she suggested. She beckoned to her brother, who came crowding up. "Take him out, he's fainting!" she commanded. "This crush is too much for him—you know he hasn't yet recovered from that attack yesterday."

Fenton staggered out on Morgan's arm, and, as the crowd made way for him, he saw Miss Carillon's eyes still upon him, with a puzzled, questioning expression. He felt base and mean.

"I must get out of here right away!" he exclaimed, as soon as they were alone in Morgan's chamber. "I've spent too much time already—I've neglected a terribly important errand."

"You've saved my life, old man," said Stillwell Morgan effusively. "I don't know what we ever should have done. You've made an awful hit. People are crazy about you! Why, Marguerite says—"

"Confound Marguerite! Where's that bag I brought?" Fenton looked eagerly about the room.

"I don't know who you are; but I'd be glad to have you consider me your friend, and if I can do anything in the world—"

"Find that bag!" Fenton exclaimed excitedly. "Lord, Man! if you knew what was in it—" He groped under the bed.

"Why, isn't it here? Say, I'll call one of the men." Morgan went to the door.

"If that isn't found I'm ruined!" cried Fenton. "Haven't you any detectives here?"

To be continued next Sunday

## CRYSTAL AMONG COAL

Continued from page 4

away, she nevertheless glanced at it,—her husband, unconscious, his fine clothes torn to shreds, his face red with blood and black with coal dust; but with all his limbs unimpaired. Yet his legs lay strangely limp.

"I got him out," said Mavis, panting and gasping for breath, "without using the ax; but his legs are broken."

Paula Dunford looked down on the inert human mass at her feet,—this man twelve years older than he to whom she had once been pledged, this man who had thwarted their loves so he might win her for himself, who had grown rich and puissant in the great metropolis at the Hudson's mouth, and then her eyes wandered to the poor, half naked, and obscure fire boss who had just torn him living from his grave. Coal and crystal—and the coal was hers!

Mavis, somewhat rested, again took the unconscious Dunford upon his shoulders and walked heavily toward the brattice that led back to the other galleries. He went a long, circuitous way, avoiding the water, doubling, and returning, and doubling again upon the great, black gangways and narrow drifts. Paula Dunford followed silently.

They reached one of the great ventilating doors. It was locked—from the other side. Henry Mavis laid his man on the ground, climbed a ladder in a stall, then made his way through a narrow crosscut airway, crawling on hands and knees until he came through to the other main gangway. Through this the water was still pouring like a river; but it had sunk several feet from the roof as it drained away steadily into the old workings. The carcasses of drowned mules floated in the tearing stream, bales of straw and great beams. He dropped into the water up to his armpits and, breasting the savage current, forced his way toward the cross gangway that led to the other side of the door.

Once he slipped on the submerged track and sank; but soon recovered his foothold. His light was extinguished; all was black. For all that, knowing his bearings well, he struggled on steadily, emerged from the

flooded gallery, and at last reached the great door. He drew the bolt and pulled it open. The fierce draft blew out the light in Mrs. Dunford's cap. As she heard the water dripping from his clothes in the thick darkness, she exclaimed in pity and fresh alarm.

"It is nothing," came his voice in the stark night, as he went on toward the hoist. "Earth, air, fire, water,—these are things a man can fight against. Come, hold me by the belt."

**THEY** lifted Lawrence Dunford from the car and laid him on the ground. The small eyes in the heavy visage opened and the hard, soulless features were stricken and subdued with pain. Mrs. Dunford was helped out and went at once to the side of her husband. She heard a cry, a fourfold cry of joy, and, turning her head, saw Henry Mavis in the arms of a young and comely woman who covered his face with kisses, while two young girls and a little lad clung to his bare arms and shouted for joy.

He stood in the sunlight, his face, arms, and body washed clean and white by the waters in the mine, a splendid figure, pure and heroic as the soul within it. A faint smile dawned on his lips, a smile of serenity and content. Protruding from one of the pockets of his wet, clinging trousers Paula caught a glimpse of the white silk strip she had torn from her dress. He had kept it!

Then her eyes fell to the distorted, blood stained, sooty features of her husband, the defiled clothes and broken form. Several men were preparing to carry the injured mine broker into the foreman's office. She followed them—she followed her duty. But her teeth were set, her eyes fell, she clenched her hands until one of them pained her strangely. This hand she raised to look at it. On the soft bruised palm, beside the wedding ring, and glistening like diamonds in the sun, lay the sharp and pointed crystal given to her in the mine by Henry Mavis—the broken morsel of crystal she had unwittingly retained.